oasis and the nearby rocky steppe where we located a few of them but failed to discover any nest although, according to their behaviour, the birds were most probably feeding their broods.

Passer hispaniolensis Spanish Sparrow

Contrary to Guichard's opinion and to Bundy and Morgan's implicit statement we do not think that it breeds in Fezzan or even nests in southern Tripolitania. We did not find it breeding south of 20 miles south of Misurata. It is well established, and proved by ringing (Bachkiroff 1953 and C.R.M.M.O.), that in North Africa, outside the breeding season, this sparrow has considerable movements and penetrates into the desert. Thus at El Hamman we saw small flocks on 31st March/1st April but none on 10th/11th May. At Ubari we recorded only a single exhausted female on 20th April, and at Sebha the last birds disappeared on 18th April except for a single female still present on 6th May.

Passer simplex Desert Sparrow

It breeds in all the oases of Fezzan, where it is common, sometimes very abundant (e.g. in Murzuk). Further north, it was recorded at El Hamman (feeding full grown chicks on 11th May), Socna, Hon and Uaddan, but not at Bu N'gem, where Guichard saw a pair on 6th November.

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The Philippine races of the Rufous-capped Grass Warbler *Megalurus timoriensis*

by Kenneth C. Parkes

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For many years all of the Philippine populations of the highly polytypic sylviid species *Megalurus timoriensis* were assigned to a single subspecies, *M. t. tweeddalei* McGregor (new name for *M. ruficeps* Tweeddale, preoccupied, type locality "Monte Alban"=Montalban, Rizal Province, Luzon). Salomonsen (1953) was the first to demonstrate that this species varies within the Philippine archipelago, and he named two new subspecies: *M. t. crex* (Kaatoan Cinchona Plantation, Mt. Katanglad [1250 m. altitude], Bukidnon Prov., Central Mindanao), and *M. t. mindorensis* (Mt. Halcon [8000 ft. altitude], Mindoro), the latter based on a single specimen. New material permitted Ripley and Rabor (1958) to review Salomonsen's work. The two additional races were upheld, but several of the diagnostic characters employed by Salomonsen were shown to be invalid.

Subspecific assignments of populations from islands other than those of the type localities (=Luzon, Mindanao, Mindoro) have varied. Salomonsen stated: "The birds inhabiting Panay, Negros and the other Visayan islands are more or less intermediate between *tweeddalei* and *crex*, although they definitely come nearest to *tweeddalei*". Ripley and Rabor (1956) listed Negros birds as *tweeddalei* without comment. Later (1958) they stated that birds from Negros "are intermediate between *tweeddalei* and *mindorensis* in some characters and *mindorensis* and *crex* in others". After a discussion of characters, they tentatively assign the Negros population to *crex*, the Mindanao race. The next authors to discuss this species were Rand and Rabor (1960). They stated that a pair of birds from Bohol were intermediate between *tweeddalei* and *crex*, but closer to the latter, and their account is headed with the name *Megalurus timoriensis crex*. Meyer de Schauensee and du Pont (1962) also listed their one Bohol specimen as *crex*, quoting Rand and Rabor on supposed intermediacy with *tweeddalei*. The treatment of Samar birds in Rand and Rabor's 1960 paper is similar to that cited above for Bohol.

Salomonsen (1953) emphasized the importance of using freshly moulted specimens when making comparisons between samples of grassland sylviids such as *Megalurus*. Not only are wing and tail measurements relatively meaningless in worn birds, but all of the colours become bleached and colder in tone. Salomonsen did *not* mention museum age, but this species appears be especially prone to post-mortem "foxing". Cold greyish browns become more reddish brown with age. Several of the colour characters ascribed to *crex* by Salomonsen appear to have been based upon comparison of his mostly newly-collected Mindanao series with older birds from other islands. In particular, the supposed differences in the colour of the underparts among *tweeddalei*, *crex* and *mindorensis* can be discounted, as illustrated by comparisons among birds of similar museum age, and comparisons of older and newer series from Luzon.

Material from the island of Leyte has not been available to previous workers. Examination of two specimens from that island has helped to clarify the geographic variation in this species in the Philippines. There appears to be a center of differentiation on Leyte; here certain characters manifest their greatest development that also appear to varying degrees on surrounding islands. The variation can best be described through the naming of an additional subspecies, as follows:—

Megalurus timoriensis alopex, subsp. nov.

Type: Carnegie Museum no. 138387, adult male in fresh plumage, collected at the Tacloban airstrip, Leyte Island, Philippines, 27th November, 1945, by T. H. Holder (collector's no. 87).

Characters: By far the reddest of the Philippines race of the species, resembling to some extent very badly foxed specimens of other races. Among the specimens examined, the type is most similar to an old (1895) and badly foxed specimen of *mindorensis*, but differs in brighter rufous flanks, pale rufous wash across breast (contrasting with the white throat), and darker, less distinct superciliary line. The superciliary line of *alopex* is less distinct than those of either *tweeddalei* or *mindorensis* (see fig. 1), being about as in *crex* but buffier, less grey. The marked rufescence on all parts of the bird serves to separate *alopex* from freshly moulted, recently collected specimens of any other Philippine race. As for measurements, *alopex* is intermediate in tail length between the large *tweeddalei* and the small *crex*; the wing is as long as that of *tweeddalei*; the bill of the type of *alopex* is slightly shorter than that of any adult of *crex* measured either by me or by Salomonsen. In addition, the bill of *alopex* appears to be somewhat stout for its length (see fig. 1).

Measurements of Type: Wing (flattened) 76.5 mm.; tail 116 mm.; bill from skull 16 mm. Salomonsen (1953) gives measurements for Luzon male *tweeddalei* as wing 75–78 (1 Carnegie Museum specimen has wing 80), tail 126–142, and bill 18–20; for Mindanao *crex* wing 68–71, tail "at most 110", bill 16.8–17.

Fig. 1 *Upper*: *Megalurus timoriensis alopex*, type specimen.
Lower: *M. t. tweeddalei*, Carnegie Mus, no. 137198, Clark Air Force Base, Pampanga Prov., Luzon.

Range: Centered on Leyte, with birds from Bohol and Cebu, to the west, nearest this subspecies. Birds from Negros, even farther west, are quite variably intermediate between *alopex* and *tweeddalei*. Birds from Samar, to the north and east of Leyte, are also variably intermediate between *alopex* and *tweeddalei*, but in some respects, especially the colder tones of the flank colour are nearest *tweeddalei*. Birds from the islands between Negros and Luzon (specimens examined from Panay, Marinduque, Tablas, and Ticao) appear to be slightly smaller than those from Luzon, but are best called *tweeddalei*. The subspecies *mindorensis* appears to be confined to Mindoro.

The principal colour characters of the four subspecies, as exemplified by unworn specimens from localities away from zones of intergradation, may be summarized as follows:—

tweeddalei: crown palest rufous; superciliary line well developed, white; colours of flanks, tail, etc. coldest in tone.

mindorensis: crown richer rufous; general colour darker and richer; superciliary line close to *tweeddalei*.

alopex: crown also richer rufous than in *tweeddalei*, but not as dark as in fresh *mindorensis;* general colour bright rufescent; superciliary line indistinct, buffy.

crex: crown dark, usually (not always) obscurely streaked with blackish; tail blackest brown of all races; flanks browner, less cold grey than in *tweeddalei* (*contra* Salomonsen); superciliary line indistinct as in *alopex*, but greyer.

Remarks: Most descriptions of the habitat of *Megalurus timoriensis* in its non-Philippine range stress its fondness for dense grasslands, both wet and dry, at virtually all altitudes; see, for example, Rand and Gilliard (1968: 352–353). Delacour and Mayr (1946: 195–196) correctly described *timoriensis* in the Philippines as somewhat more of a thicket and less of a grassland bird, although they erred in stating that it is rarely found below 3000 feet elevation. It is significant that *only* in the Philippines is *timoriensis* sympatric with a larger congener, *Megalurus palustris* (which is aptly called "Giant Warbler" by my Filipino colleagues). Each of the two species has a wide range, with *palustris* found exclusively west of, and *timoriensis* east of the traditional "Wallace's Line" separating the Indo-Malaysian and Australo-Papuan faunas —*except* in the Philippines, where both species are found virtually throughout the archipelago. Here *palustris* is, in general, the grassland bird. The respective habits and habitats of the two species in Luzon are well described by Amadon and Jewett (1946). My experience on that island paralled theirs; once I had learned its loud, distinctive "*quilp!*" call-note, I found *timoriensis* to be quite common in the lowland and foothill areas where my fieldwork was conducted, its skulking habits contrasting with the conspicuousness of *palustris*. The habitats of the two species overlapped here to some extent; I found *timoriensis* most often where shrubby second-growth woods bordered on fields of tall grass or pastures, but it did also venture out into dense grass-clumps like those described as its typical habitat outside the Philippines. Ripley and Rabor (1958) give a description of the habitat of *M. t. mindorensis* that matches well my observations of *M. t. tweeddalei*. It is apparent that a detailed study of the relationships between the two species of *Megalurus* in the Philippines may well indicate the presence of a form of "competitive exclusion", with the large *palustris* dominating the habitat normally occupied by the smaller *timoriensis*.

Etymology: The name of the new subspecies, *alopex*, is taken from the Greek word for "fox", in reference to the rufescent coloration that mimics "foxed" specimens of other races.

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General, U.S. Department of the Army. I am indebted to Dr. Canuto G. Manuel and Mr. Telesforo Oane for help in the field. The type specimen of *alopex* is from a small collection of Leyte birds exchanged to Carnegie Museum, with the consent of the collector, from the University of Arkansas through the kindness of Dr. Douglas James.

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A northern race of lark supposedly breeding in Mexico

by Allan R. Phillips

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As is well known, only one species of lark, the Horned or Shore Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*) occurs in the Americas, where it is represented by many local races in North America, south to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southern México, and an isolated one in Colombia. Certain striking parallisms occur, but no widely separated populations are now generally considered identical. Thus, as Dickerman (1963: 331) has intimated, one of the unlikely reports in Miller *et al.* (1957) is that of the breeding of *E. a. enthymia* (Oberholser) in Coahuila, at least 1100 km. (700 miles) south of its main breeding range as given by Hellmayr (1935) and the American Ornithologists' Union (1957). Earlier writers (Ridgway, 1907) considered it to breed in Canada only, much farther away. This Coahuila record was based by Miller (*op. cit.*: 105) on a series of specimens in the Moore Laboratory of Zoology at Occidental College, taken at various seasons at "4 mi. S. Hipolito", i.e. "Lake Tulio" (= Tulillo), Coahuila, by Chester C. Lamb. No other race was taken there, so this is clearly the resident population.

Through the courtesy of Dr. J. W. Hardy, I was able to study the larks of the Moore Laboratory in 1969 and to compare them to selected Mexican specimens from my collection. It was at once evident that this Coahuila series was indeed very different from any other Mexican specimens I had ever seen. It was however almost equally different from my recollection of *enthymia*. Through the courtesy of Drs. Hardy and S. M. Russell I was able to compare four males and two females of this series to known *enthymia* in the University of Arizona, so as to verify this impression. The Coahuila birds may be known as:—

Eremophila alpestris lactea, subsp. nov.

Type: Moore Laboratory of Zoology 40604, male, Lake "Tulio" (= Tulillo), 5 km. south of Hipolito = 53 km. west-north-west of Saltillo, Coahuila, 25° 38′ N., 101° 27′ W., 2nd November, 1944. Collected by C. C. Lamb (original no. 11317).

Measurements of type: Wing chord 100.5; tail 69.4 mm.

Distribution: Known only from the type locality.